

Cairns of Saskatoon

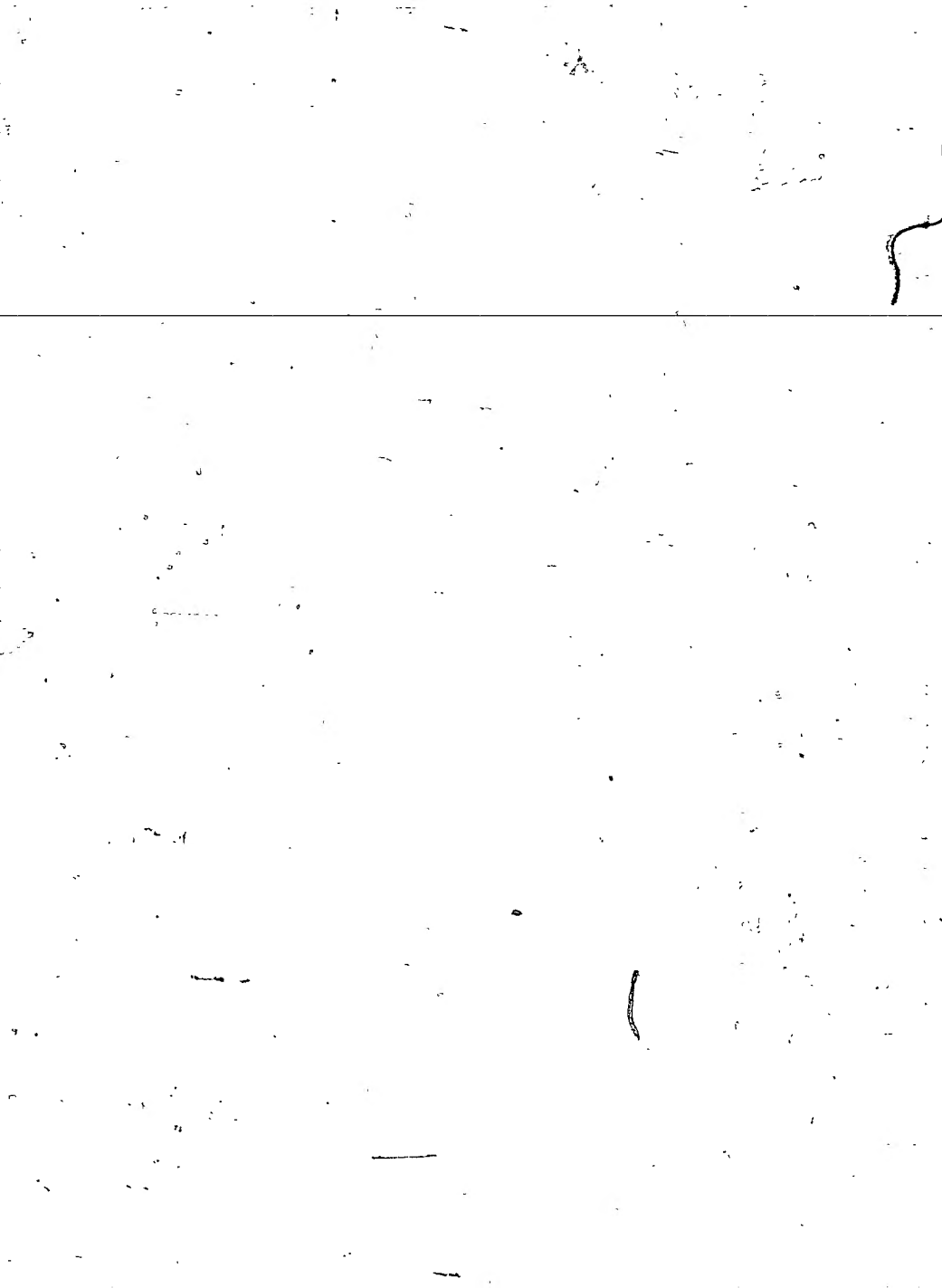
BY ELBERT HUBBARD

Shoritt

F

1074 8

C13H8

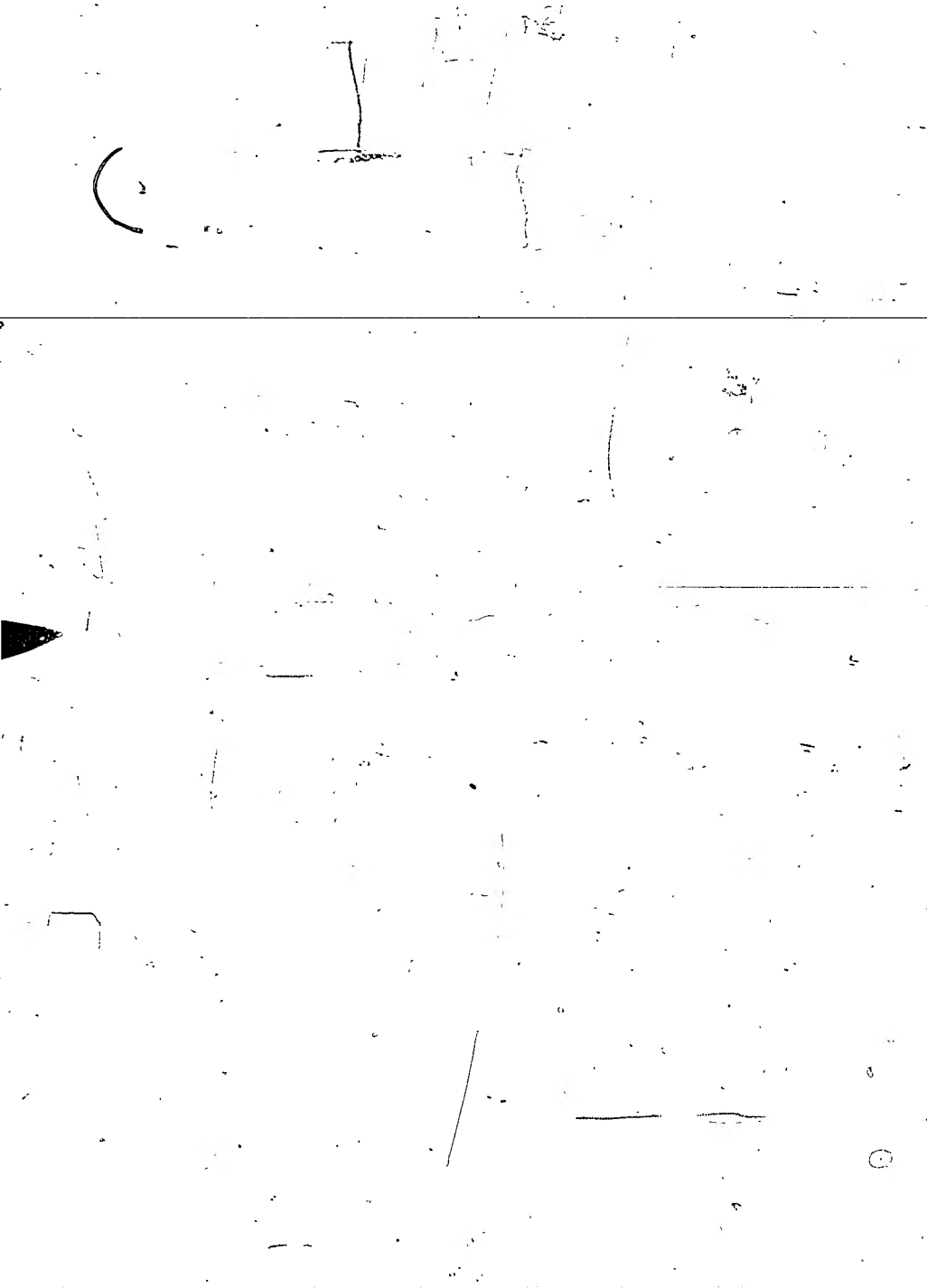


PRESENTED TO

**Saskatchewan University
Library**

By Dr. J. L. P. P.

Date JULY 3, 1907

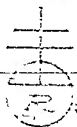


airns of Saskatoon

BEING AN
APPRECIATION

by

ELBERT HUBBARD



5-1606-
16-7-37

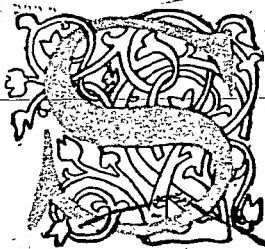
DONE INTO PRINT BY
THE ROYCROFTERS AT THEIR SHOP,
WHICH IS IN EAST AURORA,
ERIE COUNTY, N. Y.,
JULY, MCMXIII

UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



Copyright, 1913
By Elbert Hubbard

Cairns of Saskatoon



ASKATOON! Is n't there something liquid, luscious and satisfying about the name? It is an Indian word signifying, "Carpet of Flowers." So Saskatoon is in Saskatchewan, a Province of Canada. I have to explain these things, because Canada has n't really been discovered

to the world, especially in the United States. There are thousands of so-called educated people in the East who think Saskatchewan is in Kamchatka or Hawaii.

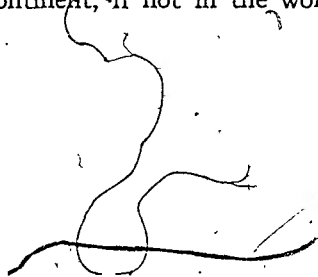
The city of Saskatoon is unlike any other city in the round world. Here things have been done bigger and better in the same space of time than men have ever done them before since history began.

"How long does it take to produce a lawn like that?" I once asked of a gardener in England. And his reply was, "Two hundred years, sir!"

Usually it takes several generations to produce a great city. You start with the camp; then comes the stockade; then the fortress; then the trading-post; then the town; finally the city.

Saskatoon began as a city, and this only ten years ago. Saskatoon was a necessity. She grew out of the needs of the hour.

The basis of the city's wealth—the reason of her prosperity—lies in the fact that she is in the center of the greatest grain-producing country on the North American Continent, if not in the world. Saskatoon ministers to a



farming country five hundred miles square, a tract as big as Illinois and Indiana combined, and a district practically just as rich.

So here comes Saskatoon, in response to the law of supply and demand, and the prayer of labor. The discovery that this vast prairie would produce wealth to a tremendous degree made a common distributing-point necessary.

Wheat is the world's greatest, first and most important food-staple.

Population has recently increased in the cities out of all proportion to population in the country. Forty years ago one-half of the population of the States were engaged in farming. Now, less than twenty-three per cent are farmers.

¶ The result is practically that the United States has ceased to export wheat. In fact, she does n't produce enough to feed her own people.

And as the United States has ceased shipping wheat abroad, Europe is looking to Canada for her food-supply.

ASKATOON is a city of thirty thousand inhabitants.

Please note that I am writing in the month of May, Nineteen Hundred Thirteen. I prophesy that in five years she will have a hundred thousand.

Saskatoon has more than thirty miles of perfect pavement.

Her principal thoroughfares have five hundred cluster-lights. Her street-railway is owned by the municipality. So also are the waterworks and the electric-light plant. Her sewerage is perfect, and is not run into the river, according to the good old methods and customs of the effete and dreamy East. Her disposal-plant is up to date, for she

prizes the purity of this noble river that flows past, searching for the sea.

Saskatoon has sixteen banks; and the necessity is apparent when we consider that Saskatoon is in the geographical center of the wheat-belt of Saskatchewan Province. And Saskatchewan produced, in the year Nineteen Hundred Twelve, wheat, oats and flax to the extent of two hundred million bushels, the value of the crop being one hundred fifty million dollars.

There are other crops besides these: cattle, sheep, hogs, horses, poultry and best of all, boys and girls.

The land in the vicinity of Saskatchewan that was sold ten years ago for three, four and five dollars an acre, is now selling for fifty, sixty and seventy-five dollars an acre, and this for the very simple reason that the land yields a paying return on this valuation.

Saskatoon has three great railroad systems: the Canadian Northern, the Canadian Pacific and the Grand Trunk Pacific. These railroads are all immensely prosperous, and the limit of their business is their hauling capacity.

The farmers for two hundred miles in every direction look to Saskatoon for their supplies.

WHEN I think of Saskatoon, I think of my old friend, J. F. Cairns, whom I knew fifteen years or so ago in Ontario. If ever a man's life was a romance, this man's is. The Cairns Store in Saskatoon is classed as a department-store, but it is something far more and different. It seems to be a sort of combination store and school, also a club—

a meeting-place for the farmers as well as for the busy citizens in Saskatoon.

The Cairns Store is a noble bit of architecture, five stories high, nearly square, complete, filled with attractive goods from cellar to roof.

It is a hive of industry, where all the helpers are filled with one desire, the desire to serve, and where good-cheer, courtesy, and kindness predominate. And what was a surprise to me was that the prices are practically Eastern prices. He who thinks that this is the land of the Eskimo figures wrongly.

HIS store sells over a million and a half dollars' worth of goods a year.

And the one peculiar thing about it is that Cairns, the owner, proprietor and general manager, is not by education and habit a businessman.

He was born in a little village, in the Province of Quebec. He was the son of a Methodist clergyman, "passing rich on forty pounds a year."

Cairns was intended for a clergyman, but became a school-teacher. His thirtieth year found him with five hundred dollars saved up, the result of ten years' steady work schoolteaching.

I notice that the commercial agencies rate him as being worth from five hundred thousand to a million dollars, and they give him the highest credit-rating that their code supplies.

Cairns came here in Nineteen Hundred Three, broken in

health, but not in spirit. He had his five hundred dollars and a wife and boy.

At that time there were one hundred thirty people in Saskatoon. Cairns thought at first of starting a school, but the people did n't seem to be in as much need of schools as they were of bread.

And so Mr. and Mrs. Cairns just thought it over and they decided they would supply the people the thing they needed most—and that was simply plain bread.

"When people ask for bread, don't give 'em an education," said Cairns.

Mr. Cairns was willing to learn to bake. He bought an oven down in Winnipeg, built a cheap little shack, and started baking loaves of bread; then biscuits; then pies—Yankee pies — —

A baker out of a job came along, and was duly hired.

☞ Saskatoon was a city of tents and shacks, and these tents and shacks were filled with hungry people, who ate three times a day. Saskatchewan is a great place to get up an appetite.

A peculiar thing about a bakery is that the products you sell one day disappear the next.

If you sell a man a book, he may keep it for a year, or two years, or five. One book will last him a long time. But when it comes to eatables, the thing is different.

Cairns, college professor, man of brains, with an alphabet behind his name, was n't too proud to deliver loaves of bread. Then he bought a cart when business had increased to a point where he could no longer carry the products in a basket — —

Why should n't a man of brains be a good servant?

Cairns knew how to meet people on an equality. He was courteous, respectful, friendly. His business grew. He sort of monopolized the bakery business of the town by divine right, and as the business grew Cairns grew with it.

When a high-school board was formed, Cairns naturally was made the Chairman of it. In fact, he helped organize the first school.

Now in Saskatoon there are seven schools, each costing upward of a hundred thousand dollars. In addition, there is a "Collegiate," or a high school, which serves as a preparatory school to the University.

On the banks of the Saskatchewan, overlooking the river, is the University of Saskatchewan, backed by an appropriation of five million dollars.

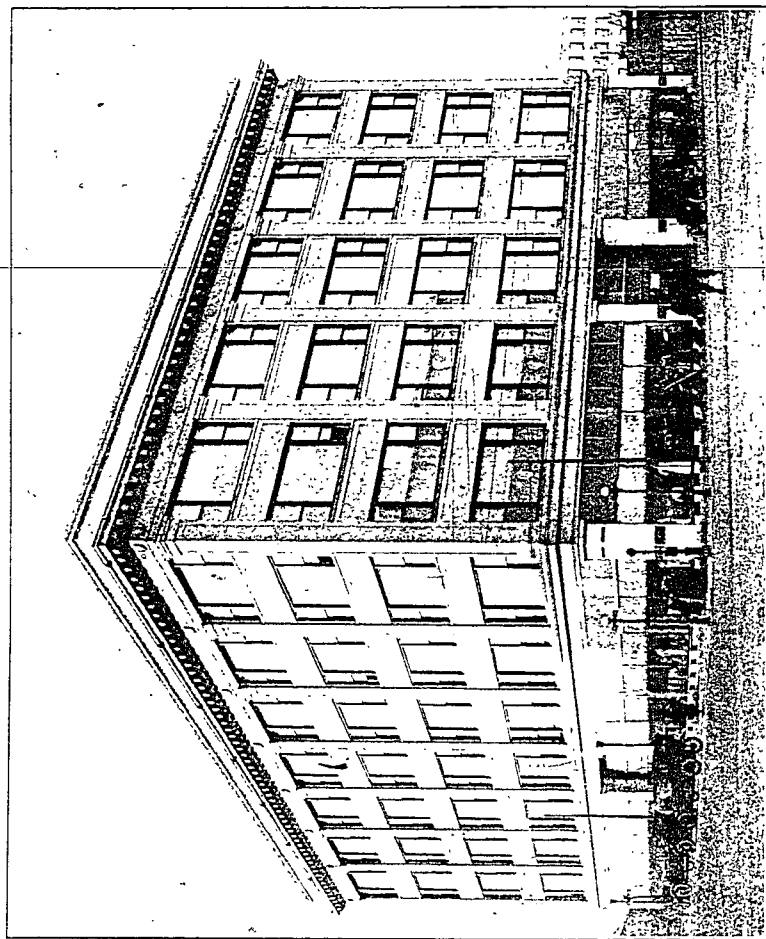
Already the beautiful buildings are taking form and shape, and the first class has been graduated.

SASKATOON prides herself on her educational advantages. Saskatoon is building for the future; and in this matter of education, no man in Saskatoon exerts a bigger, wider and more beneficent influence than J. F. Cairns, owner and manager of the Cairns Store.

Naturally, you wonder how the bakeshop evolved into a department-store. The change was easy. Every good thing begins as something else.

Cairns found he could sell bread, cakes, pies and then fruits and canned goods. Campers and farmers fitting out with supplies came in. Almost every day, homesteaders bought out everything Cairns had in stock.

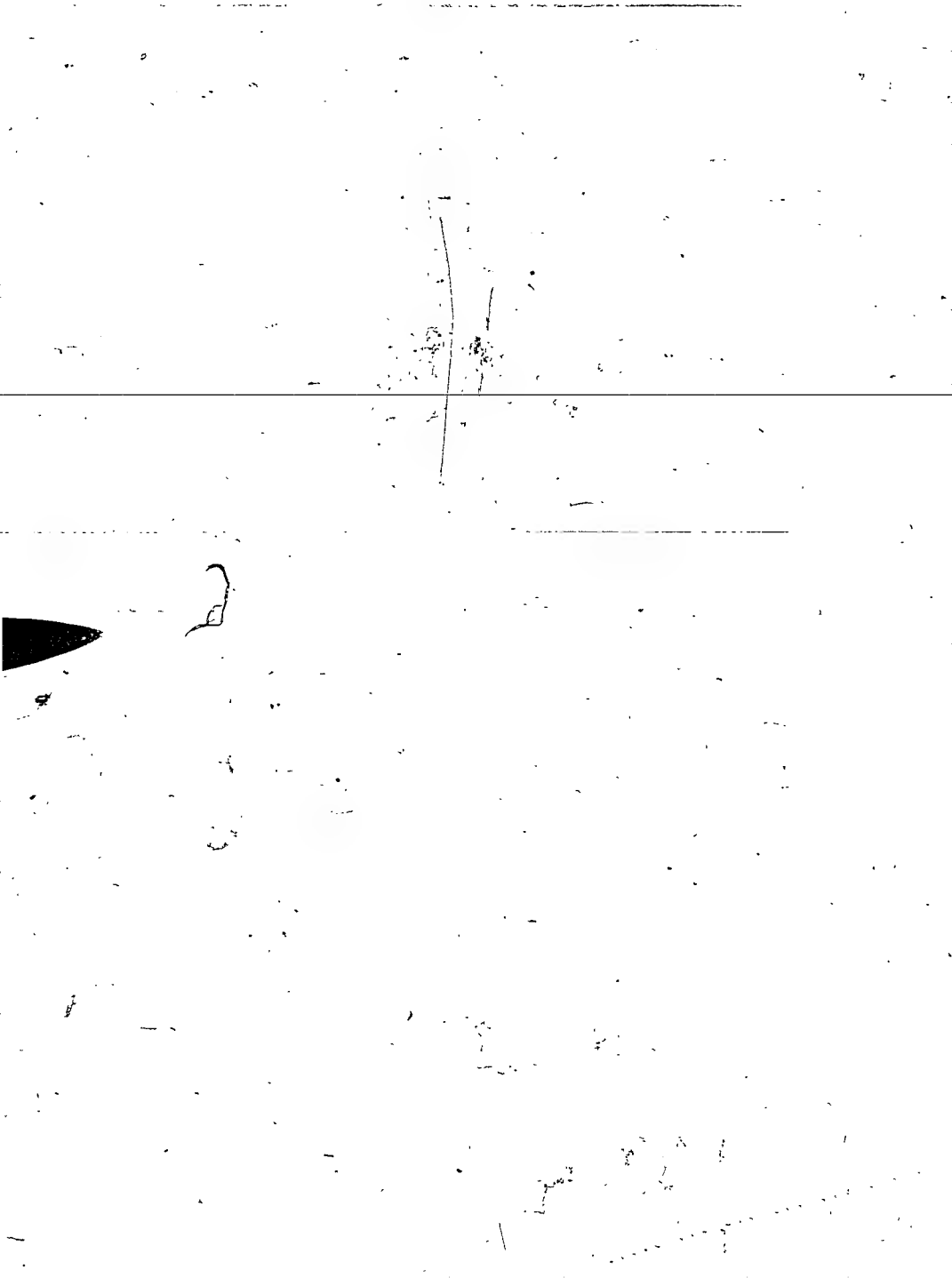




THE CAIRNS STORE



J. F. CAIRNS



One day a grocery salesman came along from Hamilton, Ontario. This man had known Cairns in the old school-teaching days, just as I did. He had sold Cairns little bills of canned goods. Now he made the suggestion, "Why not put in groceries?"

And Cairns replied that he had n't any money to buy stock.

"Leave that to me," said the man. "Let me ship you a carload of groceries."

"But I have no money to pay for them," was the answer.

"Pay for them when you can."

"But your firm will not trust me."

"My firm will trust anybody whose orders I send in," said the man.

And so the salesman ordered out a carload of groceries for Cairns.

The groceries came, and Cairns and his wife revealed themselves genuine shopkeepers, for they were able to make a display unequalled by any ever shown in Saskatoon.

In a year Cairns had bought a lot and erected a two-story building. The success of the groceries suggested an enlargement of the store.

Homesteaders who came to buy food-supplies asked where was the best place to buy drygoods, boots, shoes and clothing. And one fine day Cairns just up and wrote to a friend in Toronto to ship him out a carload of assorted drygoods and clothing.

And the goods came. Then there was one floor devoted to drygoods and the other to clothing.

And so the business evolved, as the town grew. The two-

story building was outgrown. One with three floors was secured. Up to date Cairns has occupied four different stores 30 30

Four months ago he moved into this magnificent structure of brick and steel and concrete. The fixtures were put in by a Chicago architect. The whole thing has the feeling of a thoroughly up-to-date department-store, equal to the best you will find, say, in Buffalo, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, Grand Rapids, or any city of a hundred thousand or so in the East.

SOME people imagine that Saskatoon is a thousand miles from nowhere, and that prices of supplies here must necessarily be very high. The fact is, however, that Cairns sells his goods on a very moderate per cent of profit. He trades fast. You will find things here just about as reasonable in price as you will find in Hamilton, Toronto, Montreal Buffalo or Detroit.

Shipments are made in carload lots, and the Canadian Pacific and the Grand Trunk, while not exactly in business for the health of their stockholders, still give just consideration to the businessmen who live along their lines.

A railroad thrives only as its patrons thrive. And the great Cairns Store of Saskatoon has thriven as the farmers thereabouts have produced the wheat, the oats and the flax.

THE Cairns Store does not deal in cheap goods, for the simple reason that the farmers in the vicinity of Saskatoon and the residents thereabouts want the best and are able to pay for the best.

In the Cairns Store you will find men's shirts running at prices from one dollar to fifteen dollars each; men's suits from ten dollars to fifty dollars; overcoats from fifteen to seventy-five dollars; fur overcoats from twenty-five to five hundred dollars; women's dresses run in price to a hundred dollars each; furniture as high as two thousand dollars a suite; millinery up to one hundred twenty-five dollars for a single hat.

It seems astounding that people in a country where land, ten years ago, was selling for three to five dollars an acre, should now have everything in way of luxury that can be found in the capitals of America and Europe. The reason is simple—they have money and they have prospects.

THE Cairns Store is the headquarters for every newcomer. When you go to Saskatoon, go and see Cairns, telling who you are, what you want, and he will put you next to the right individual or concern.

Nobody need be lonely or homesick in Saskatoon. Cairns looks after that. He is a sort of father-confessor to the entire city—a man who is not a merchant, but yet who has had the insight and foresight and prophetic vision to pick the right sort of men and women to man every department of his Commercial Craft.

I never saw a more intelligent, alert and finer body of young men and women than I saw in the Cairns Store.

The day I was there, there were notices placed on every door, reading as follows: "This store will be closed from twelve o'clock to one, in honor of the visit of Elbert Hub-

bard, who will address the employees and the general public in the Restaurant-Room at 12:15."

And so there gathered together all of the workers—shop-girls, cash-girls, salesmen, department heads, bundle-boys, delivery-clerks, with several hundred citizens as well; and I talked to them right out of my heart for forty minutes or more on the subject of work and business.

I never had a more responsive, kindly and intelligent audience than on that particular occasion.

I found out later that addresses to the Cairns employees were not unusual. When men of prominence came along, they were invited always to visit the Cairns Store, and if they cared to talk to the girls and boys, they were solicited to do so.

Railroad-contractors, bankers, politicians, poets, artists, writers, come here and speak. No man-of-wealth or position or power ever visits Saskatoon without paying his respects to Cairns.

DIPLING says, "They little know of England who only England know!"

We might also say that the man who is simply a merchant and nothing else, is n't much of a merchant.

Cairns is a man of intellect and a man of tact. He is a commonsense man. Fate has bumped the follies, frivols and foolishness out of him. His success did not come too early in life. He is big in body, big in brain, generous, kindly, sympathetic, able, farseeing. He has been several times solicited, I was told, to stand for Member of Parlia-

ment, but he has declined all political honors, save the position as Chairman of the High-School Board and of the Park Commission.

He is interested in parks, playgrounds, tree-planting, good roads, kindergartens and civic improvements of every kind and sort.

Napoléon said, "I fight my battles with my marshals!"

And so Cairns might say the same. His success has turned on selecting the right sort of people to man and manage the various departments of his business.

Cairns seldom issues an order. He makes a suggestion. He will say to a head of a department, "Don't you think we had better do this?" and the man seeing that the suggestion is a good one thinks that it is his own idea, and puts it over.

It is a wonderful thing to manage people without their knowing it: to be a disciplinarian, and keep your discipline out of sight.

Cairns was an able schoolteacher, and the system and regulation that he brought to bear in schoolteaching he has inaugurated in the management of his business.

But certainly the man has grown, expanded, and his point of view has changed with the passing years.

He is now just barely turned forty. He has not yet reached his meridian.

He will continue to be one of the big men in Saskatchewan for many years to come. But he is not so big that he runs a steam-roller and flattens out the individuality of other people. He is an inspirer of merchants, an encourager of men so so

IN a great measure, I am convinced that Cairns is the man who has keyed Saskatoon to its present degree of artistic beauty, complete co-operation, and its generous live-and-let-live policy.

Saskatoon welcomes the newcomer.

Any man with right intent and the habit of industry and economy will find friends in Saskatoon. The whole place, in fact, is a city of friends. Co-operation, reciprocity, mutuality, here prevail.

If you are interested in Saskatoon, write to Cairns. Better still, go and see him. See what he has done, and done without capital, and then take heart.

The success of this man puts to shame all of the whining, sniveling, complaining mass of moral derelicts. Here is a man who was untrained in business, unversed in commercial ways, brought up to preach and to teach, who yet steps into business, and realizing that commerce is human service, makes for himself a place and becomes a power for good. Cairns helps himself by helping other people.

No man trades with Cairns who does n't make money.

HE Cairns Store is operated absolutely on the one-price and moneyback policy. Everybody must be satisfied; everybody must be pleased.

Here are rest-rooms for women, writing-rooms, reading-rooms, telephones, telegraph, stenographers, post-office facilities, an express-office, a bureau of information, and everything that can add to the comfort and well-being of the customer. The whole place breathes a homely, friendly, kindly atmosphere.

There are salesmen here who speak half-a-dozen languages; and no matter what country you're from, you need not feel that you are a stranger in a strange world when you visit Cairns.

The biggest asset in life is the matter of goodwill; and friendship is goodwill in motion.

Cairns has saturated his business with the element of courtesy, goodwill and the desire to serve. He is a great public servant. His education, his brains, his appreciation of art and literature, his knowledge of history, mathematics and the languages, are at the disposal of any one who can use them. And yet the man is no "high-brow." He is one of the common people, focused, concentrated and consecrated.

¶ If Cairns has prospered, as he certainly has, it is because he has rendered this evolving, growing and expanding city of Saskatoon and the entire Province of Saskatchewan a great and splendid service.

And yet the man is modest. He talks little. He never boasts. He is simple, direct and businesslike. He has all the time there is. He is a good listener. He is never in a hurry, never nervous, agitated, fussy—and all this on account of the fact that he has the supreme ability of getting other people to do his work.

If you want to get things done, call on the busy man—the other kind has no time!

Without holding an office, Cairns is yet the ruling spirit of Saskatoon, and this simply by universal acclaim.

Cairns can laugh. He can play. He can frolic with the children. And best of all, he can sympathize with the aspirations of the grown-ups.

Cairns was intended for a minister and he is a minister still. There is nothing finer than to be a minister—that is, to minister to the needs of humanity, to be a friend to all, without patronizing or pauperizing or working the paternal.

¶ To be dignified, self-contained, self-reliant, live your own life and allow others to live theirs—this is a big thing!

¶ Cairns of Saskatoon is a man first. Secondly, he is a great merchant.

The fact that he is filled with a civic pride, and his heart is with Saskatoon, has no doubt helped immensely in his business. But he does n't work the civic side of the proposition in order to get business. The business comes simply because Cairns delivers the goods.

Cairns supplies the goods—the best goods at the least possible per cent of profit. And this is why the Cairns Store is the biggest and best-managed institution of its kind in the Province of Saskatchewan.

My heart is with beautiful, growing, expanding Saskatoon, where nothing is quite good enough, but where the desire is everywhere to make things better. And when I think "Saskatoon," involuntarily I think "Cairns."

The word "Cairns" stands for Human Service.

